fairly bright, midway between first quarter and full moon; and there was no cloud cover. The incident followed a fall of 134 points of rain, although none had fallen for 20 hours. The birds preened for slightly more than ten minutes during which they were watched continuously with a head-torch.

—JOHN DELL, Kalamunda

Irruption of White-winged Black Terns, 1970.—An irruption of White-winged Black Terns *(Chlidonias leucoptera)* occurred in the Perth metropolitan area between February 7 and 25, 1970. I first noted the birds on February 7 at Jackadder Lake; a flock of 45 were diving for small fish. Several of the terns appeared exhausted and only flew reluctantly when approached. Subsequent observations revealed that the terns spent most of the mornings feeding over nearby vacant land, feeding on grasshoppers. One bird was seen to capture and consume a large skink. During the afternoon the terns returned to the lake.

Observations sent to me by Messrs. T. Spence, R. H. Stranger, M. Ellis and Dr. D. L. Serventy revealed that the terns were seen at the following localities:

Riverton Bridge, 9 birds
Lake Yanchep, 100+ birds
Bibra Lake, 11 birds
Lake Richmond, 2 birds
Mongers Lake, 70+ birds
Jackadder Lake, 45 birds

The terns had all disappeared by February 25. Undoubtedly this irruption was associated with Cyclone Glynis which had moved down the Western Australian coast during the week prior to February 11.

—BRIAN HUTCHISON, Woodlands

Records of the Spotted Bower-bird in the Murchison District.—Serventy and Whittell *(Birds of Western Australia,* 4th. edn., 1967, p. 419) give the south-western limits of the range of occurrence of the Spotted Bower-bird *(Chlamydera maculata)* as the middle reaches of the Gascoyne River, Meekatharra and Malcolm. I now present evidence extending the bird's occurrence somewhat to the south of these limits.

During a holiday trip with the family to the Cue district in August 1969 we went out to Poona, 40 miles N.W. of Cue and south of the Weld Range. While at lunch near a dry watercourse, east of the airstrip by Finn Ryan's camp, my wife and I saw a bird fly into a low branch of a mulga. I did not have time to get my binoculars but I am sure that it was a Spotted Bower-bird. I doubt if any other bird, likely to be seen, would be so markedly spotted. I was not able to detect the nuchal collar before the bird flew off, as it was partly obscured by foliage. I noticed a small native fig, *Ficus platypoda,* near the watercourse. Serventy and Whittell believe that distribution of the bower-bird is largely determined by that of the wild fig.

I mentioned the observation to a correspondent, Mr W. M. Jones of Cue, who wrote in reply: "With reference to the bower-bird you mentioned about. If I remember right there are some out at Tuckabiana way but just casually we called them Mimic Birds in years gone by. There are several heaps of stones out there comprising about 1 cwt. of small stones, and these are supposed to be their playgrounds, according to what I have heard." Mr Jones added that he often went out of the camp to look for a cat or dog, induced to do so by the calls, but only saw the "Mimic Birds." Tuckabiana is 15 miles E.S.E. of Cue.

—DAVID HUTCHISON, Wembley Downs

Possible Sighting of European Curlew at Point Peron.—The inclusion of the European Curlew *(Numenius arquata)* on the Australian bird list is based solely on sight observations at Nightcliff, in the Darwin area, in March and April, 1948, by the American ornithologist, Herbert D. Deignan *(Records of the American-Australian Scientific Expedition to Arnhem Land,* 4, 1964 : 369). I now report a very probable occurence of the species at Point Peron.

In November 1969 I visited the National Fitness Council Camp at Point Peron, where Pat and Howard Milne were holding a camp for native children from the Cundeelee Mission. In the morning the tide was very low, exposing extensive sand flats. Groups of waders were feeding along the shore. Among the flocks were Knots, Little Stints, Grey-tailed Tattlers (3), Bar-tailed Godwits (several), Curlew Sandpipers and six curlews.

Our presence disturbed the birds, which flew out to sea. However two birds separated from the main flock of waders and flew back past me. Their large down-curved bills and large body size immediately identified them as curlews. As the birds flew only ten yards away they turned in front of me, exposing the back and rump. The rump was white and appeared to extend up the back—this is a diagnostic feature of the European Curlew.

I submit this record not as a proven sighting but to alert observers to the possible occurrence of this bird in Western Australia. Deignan was quite confident in accepting the white rump as a decisive identification: "I have no hesitation in affirming that this easily identified bird should be added to the Australian list: it is as large and as long-billed as *N. madagascariensis*, but differs at a glance by its white rump patch."

—BRIAN HUTCHISON, Woodlands

Association between the Sulphur-crested Cockatoo and *Pandanus*.—One of the collections of *Pandanus de-Lestangii* Martelli in the Queensland Herbarium is a staminate sheet dated 6 November 1926 which bears a letter from the collector, Albert de Lestang. H. St. John, in Part 23 of his Revision of the Genus *Pandanus* Stickman *(Pacific Science,* 21, 1967 : 523-530), quotes part of this letter, including the following details:

> 'Thousands of White Cockatoos *(Cacatua galerita)* systematically comb the *Pandanus* for syncarps, beginning in February they tear down each drupe in quest of a kind of fly larvae which, I think, are solely associated with this fruit. The greater part of the drupes fall in the water below where herds of turtles [Chelidae] gluttonously swallow whole the falling drupes; those falling up the banks are not lost either, for when all the *Pandanus* are clean of syncarps the cockatoos search the ground carefully for the dry nuts and with their powerful beak crush and extract the edible parts.'

The late Albert de Lestang was an amateur naturalist who gathered abundant material and recorded good data (St. John, *loc. cit* : 526). According to Mr. Selwyn Everist, Government Botanist, Queensland Herbarium *(in litt.),* he was a Frenchman who lived in somewhat feudal style on a small property, Adel's Grove, on Lawn Hill Creek about 90 miles south-west of Burketown, north-western Queensland. He established what he called a Botanic Garden and from this valley collected an extraordinary variety of plants. His specimens of *Pandanus de-Lestangii* were from this area. (Although St. John quotes from the label of the holotype 'growing under palms along perennial streams about 200 miles south-west of Burketown,' C. T. White, in a letter to Martelli dated 27 November 1925, wrote of the holotype '. . . the specimen I believe was collected over 100 miles to the south-west of Burketown . . .'; certainly, 200 miles south-west places us in the Northern Territory, on the cracking blacksoil plains of Gallipoli).

J. Forshaw *(Australian Parrots,* 1969 : 87) does not mention *Pandanus* spp. in his discussion of the feeding habits of *Cacatua galerita.* It is probable, however, that the eating of Pandanus syncarps (and whatever insect larvae they contain) is a widespread practice with this cockatoo. In mid-July 1968, in pandanus-eucalypt woodland at Tortilla Flats on the Adelaide River, NT (13° 05'S., 131° 13'E.) I noted a small group of *Cacatua galerita* feeding on these fruits, and in early August 1968, in similar habitat at McColl's Bore on the Armstrong River, NT (*ca.* 16° 39'S,. 131° 51'E.), I recorded this feeding behaviour on three occasions. Other observers must surely have further records tucked away in their notebooks.

—SHANE A. PARKER, Arid Zone Research Institute, Alice Springs, N.T.